

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following comments. Claim 25 has been amended for clarity, and to include elements of claim 26, which has subsequently been canceled. Claim 27 has also been canceled, leaving claims 25, 28 and 30-34 pending. No new matter has been added as a result of the amendments presented herein.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings for failing to include several reference signs mentioned in the specification. Specifically, the Examiner has asserted that Figures 31 and 32 lack reference to “an aperture” and “a first surface”. More accurately, it appears that these elements are recited in claim 25, rather than in the specification itself. Claim 25 has been amended appropriately, thereby eliminating any basis for the objection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s rejection of claim 27 under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, for lack of enablement. Claim 27 has been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s rejection of claims 25-28, 30-31 and 34 under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by Baker et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,693,083 (hereinafter Baker). In order to anticipate, the cited reference must disclose each and every claimed element. Baker fails to do so.

The present invention is directed to a guidewire system that includes two wires or wire members. A first wire or wire member has an end having a lumen with a female threading disposed within the lumen. A second wire or wire member has an end having an engagement structure proximate to the end, where the engagement structure threadingly engages the female threading of the first wire. In some embodiments, the engagement structure can include male threading. One of skill will recognize that the claimed invention describes a guidewire system.

Baker neither describes nor suggests the claimed invention. Instead, Baker is directed to a delivery catheter designed for delivering a thoracic graft. The Examiner has asserted that Baker discloses each claimed element. Apparently the Examiner has randomly combined disparate elements of Baker, without regard to the structure or function of the individual

disparate elements or to any relationships that may exist between the individual disparate elements.

Baker does disclose a wire 57 (described by Baker as a release wire) and a wire 91 (described by Baker as a control wire). Baker does disclose a nose cone 94 having female threading and a corresponding superior cap 92 having male threading. However, these elements are apparently unrelated to the release wire 57 and the control wire 91. The nose cone 94 having female threading is not part of the first wire. The superior cap 92 having male threading is not part of the second wire.

Thus, Baker does not describe or suggest a first wire or wire member having a lumen with female threading therein and a second wire or wire member having structure (such as male threading) that will threadingly engage with the female threading, and thereby connect two wires end to end. Therefore, Baker fails to disclose a claimed element and thus for at least this reason cannot be considered as anticipating the claimed invention.

In some embodiments, for example in claims 25 and 30, the engagement structure includes male threading that can include a deformable portion that, when threadingly engaged with the female threading, is adapted to deform. In some embodiments, for example, as indicated in claim 31, this deformation acts to inhibit relative rotation. The Examiner points to column 8, lines 16-18 of Baker as allegedly disclosing this feature. This citation from Baker merely discloses that the superior cap 92 having male threading will thread into the nose cone 94 having female threading. There is absolutely no suggestion of part of the male threading being deformable or deforming when threaded into the female threading. Once again, Baker fails to disclose a claimed element and thus for at least this reason cannot be considered as anticipating the claimed invention. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of dependent claims 32-33 under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Baker. As discussed above, Baker fails to teach or suggest the invention of claim 30. Claims 32 and 33 include the elements of claim 30 and thus are similarly patentable over Baker. Additionally, claims 32 and 33 each include additional elements that further distinguish them over Baker.

Claims 28 and 34 each recite means for coupling a first end of a first wire to a second end of a second wire. Applicants note that this "means plus function" claim language is

governed by the provisions of 35 USC § 112, 6th paragraph. In particular, the means for coupling should be construed as including any structure that is disclosed in the specification and all equivalents thereto. As described above, Baker fails to describe the coupling means described in the specification or any equivalents. Once gain, Baker fails to disclose a claimed element and thus Baker does not anticipate claims 28 or 34.

In view of the amendments and comments presented herein, favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, the undersigned attorney may be contacted at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN K. BALZUM et al.

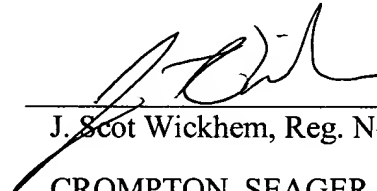
By their Attorney,

Date: June 9, 2003



28075

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE



J. Scot Wickhem, Reg. No. 41,376
CROMPTON, SEAGER & TUFTE, LLC

1221 Nicollet Avenue, Suite 800
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403-2420
Telephone: (612) 677-9050
Facsimile: (612) 359-9349